



CITY COUNCIL

Public Works Committee

Monday, July 20, 2009 ***Meeting Report***

Committee Members Attending: M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, chair, S. Fuhs, D. Sterner

Others Attending: R. Hottenstein, C. Hemnitz, C. Younger, C. Jones, L. Kelleher, O. Smith

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

Public Private Partnerships for Parks and Playgrounds

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that she is seeking a positive way for private entities to take some responsibility for maintenance of public recreation facilities. She noted the past successful relationships the City has had with the Hillside Playground Association, Centre Park Association, and Pagoda Skyline. She expressed the belief that City personnel is challenged to maintain all available public facilities.

Mr. Sterner noted a similar discussion for the operation of the Pagoda.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz added that the Pagoda Skyline has successfully raised funds to rehabilitate the Fire Tower and the Stonewalls along Skyline Drive.

Mr. Sterner noted Hillside Playground Association's success in maintaining the playground area and providing fundraisers to purchase items for the playground that are beyond the cities capabilities.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz also cited the success of a local community group in clearing and maintaining Confluence Park.

Mr. Jones stated that the Public Works Department would welcome this type of assistance; however a single stumbling block may lie within the collective bargaining agreement. He stated that the issue of displacing City employees needs to be addressed.

Mr. Fuhs noted the success of Adopt-A-Park park programs in other municipalities. Mr. Jones stated that he is unsure if replacing these maintenance jobs would violate the collective bargaining agreement. He complained that the AFSCME contract prohibits outsourcing functions currently covered by Public Works Staff.

Mr. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the willingness of a church organization to assist the City with maintenance and up keep of Neversink Playground. She requested that Mr. Jones address this issue with the union as soon as possible. Mr. Smith noted the agreement Randy Gaston and his organization has for the use of Egelman's Park. Mr. Jones stated that Mr. Gaston's group takes care of minor maintenance and the City takes care of larger tasks.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested that Mr. Jones develop a list of existing arrangements with private entities. She inquired if the City PARC would like to become involved in this effort. Mr. Smith replied that the PARC would be interested in this type of outreach

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz requested that Mr. Jones provide a report on the existing agreements with private organizations and the scope of service at the August Public Works meeting. He expressed the belief that current Public Works staff has a difficult time handling the plethora of City park areas.

East Ends Contract Update

Mr. Younger stated that the final draft of the lease has been sent to East Ends. East Ends response is awaited.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the need for the rehabilitation of Mineral Spring Park and suggested that the East Ends organization become involved in this project.

Review of Capital Projects: Capital Project

Mr. Hottenstein distributed a list of 2008-2009 Capital Improvement Projects as follows:

- Pagoda renovations \$1.2M - COMPLETED
- Baer Park Playground renovation \$43K – IN PROGRESS
- Baer Park Field House renovation \$50K - ON HOLD
- City Park improvements \$1M – IN PROGRESS
- Firing Range classroom addition \$252K – IN PROGRESS
- Duryea Drive guardrails \$215K – COMPLETED
- Street Scape improvements \$1.1M – IN PROGRESS
- Skyline Drive wall repair \$170K – COMPLETED
- Stadium Improvements \$1.3M – SCHEDULED FOR LATE 2010
- Oakbrook Fire Station \$2.5M – CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULED FOR FALL 2010

Mr. Hottenstein stated that the Finance Department is unable to complete audit reports for Capital Projects underway and completed.

Mr. Kelleher stated that the assignment to audit Capital Projects, as required by the Charter, has been given to the City Auditor. She stated that she began working for the City in 1996 and an audit of a Capital Project, as required by the Charter, has never occurred. She explained the rationale behind this requirement.

Mr. Spencer noted Council's past request to the Auditor to begin this and other functions. He stated that those requests have been ignored. He suggested that Mr. Hottenstein and Council draft a joint memo to the City Auditor requesting that the audit process to begin for Capital Projects.

Mr. Heminitz stated that a meeting on City Park Project is scheduled for next Thursday, July 30, 2009.

Mr. Jones noted the difference of opinion on the installation of a fence around the pond. Mr. Spencer stated that he learned that teenagers have been selling fish taken from the Bandshell pond. Mr. Jones stated that when the pond is drained the fish will be relocated to Egelman's.

Mr. Spencer and Mr. Jones noted the City's liability if the pond is not properly secured by a fence.

Permanent Street Sweeping Schedule

Ms. Kelleher noted the receipt of a petition to add the 200 block of Clifton Street to the permanent street sweeping schedule. Mr. Jones stated that the permanent street sweeping schedule began in Center City and grew outward from there. He stated that the Public Works Department cannot go west of the river at this point in time.

Bernhart's Lake

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz asked for an update on the need to drain the lake to allow the inspection of the Bernhart's Dam breast. Mr. Jones stated that currently Gannett Flemming is currently undertaking a bathometric survey which will provide a method to inspect the dam breast without totally draining the lake.

Mr. Spencer noted that should the lake be totally drained the City's liability for the contamination for Bernhart's Park would be greatly increased due to the public access to the most highly contaminated areas of the park.

The Public Works Committee adjourned at approximately 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, City Clerk

FOLLOW UP ITEMS

- Addition of dog runs in select City parks
- Cost of dog clean up stations - purchased four (4), \$506.35 will be installed at Angelica Creek Park by the end of July
- Electronic billboards - City purchased light meter to measure the amount of lumens on electronic billboards which will allow enforcement
- Abandoned home on 539 S. 15th St
- ATVs on Neversink Mountain - Berks County Conservancy hired security guards to patrol the area with assistance from RPD.
- Parking issues in 1500 block N. 14th St - of four reported addresses, two required enforcements
- Report on existing contractual or maintenance agreements with private entities and the scope of their service
- Audit of Capital Projects completed and in progress by City Auditor